A N N U A L R E P O R T

to

The Members of the

WILLENHALL URBAN DISTRICT COUNCIL

by

Henry J Dean

L.R.C.S.,L.S.A.

Medical Officer of Health,

for Year ended 31st December 1917.

Willenhall, May 1918.

To The Chairman and Members of the

Willenhall Urban District Council.

Gentlemen,

Herewith I beg tp present my third Annual Report on the Health and Sanitary Condition of the District under your administration, for the Year 1917.

Owing to the continued necessity for strict economy, and the demands made upon Medical Officers because of the War, the Local Government Board recommend that interim Reports only should be made for the Year, and that the Reports should be confined to essential and urgent matters which have affected the Public Health during the Year, especially any matters arising from or connected with the War, outbreaks of Infectious Disease and measures for Maternity and Child Welfare, together with any exceptional administrative measures taken or recommended by the Medical Officer of Health.

Acting on these suggestions this Report deals only with the questions especially mentioned, and in a brief form.

Population. The Registrar General directs that the Death Rate be calculated on an estimated Civil Population of ~~or~~ 18.180 and the Birth Rate on an estimated Total Population of 20.266. The population at the last Census (1911) was 18.858.

Births. The Births registered during the Year numbered 451, i.e. 228 males and 223 females, being 32 less than last year and 78 less than in 1915. The Birth Rate was 22·2 per thousand per annum as compared with 23·9, 28·1 and 28·8 in the three ~~pre~~ previous years.

There were 21 illegitimate births included in the above number, viz, 8 males and 13 females.

It will be noticed that this year there is again a decrease in the number of Births, and when compared with two years ago it is considerable.

Deaths. There were 249 deaths registered in the District, i.e. 122 males and 127 females, giving a Death Rate of 13·7 per thousand per year.

In addition, 50 persons, i.e. 35 males and 15 females belonging to the District died in Public Institutions outside the Town, e.g. "Transferable Deaths"; thus the total number of Deaths was 299, and the nett Death Rate of all belonging to the District was 16·4 per thousand per year, as compared with 12·8, 18·4, and 17·2 in the three previous years.

The following Table gives the Number and Causes of Deaths in Willenhall for the year, as supplied ~~to~~ by the Registrar General:-

	All Causes (civilians only)	Males	Females
1	Enteric Fever		
2	Small Pox		
3	Measles	4	11
4	Scarlet Fever		
5	Whooping Cough	3	6
6	Diphtheria & Croup		
7	Influenza	2	2
8	Erysipelas		
9	Pulmonary Tuberculosis	11	13
10	Tuberculosis Meningitis	1	
11	Other Tuberculous diseases	3	2
12	Cancer, Malignant disease	7	5
13	Rheumatic Fever		
14	Meningitis		2
15	Organic Heart Disease	11	10
16	Bronchitis	9	15
17	Pneumonia (all forms)	22	21
18	Other respiratory diseases	3	3
19	Diarrhoea etc (under 2 yrs)	4	4
20	Appendicitis & typhlitis	1	1
21	Cirrhosis of liver	1	
22a	Alcoholism		
22	Nephritis & Bright's disease	3	2
23	Puerperal Fever		
24	Parturition apart from puerperal fvr		
25	Congenital debility etc	18	10
26	Violent deaths, excluding suicide	6	3
27	Suicide	2	
28	Other defined diseases	46	32
29	Causes ill-defined or unknown		
	Total (all causes)	157	142

Special Causes (included above)	Males	Females
Cerebro-spinal Fever		2
Poliomyelitis		
Deaths of infants under 1 yr of age	30	30
Total Births	228	223
Legitimate	220	210
Illegitimate	8	13
Population, for birth rate,	20,266	
for death rate	18,180	

The Death Rate (18.4) is about equal to the average of the last 5 years (16.8) and I do not regard it as a high one for Willenhall. In reviewing the table of deaths from all causes, the outstanding feature is the large number of deaths from Pneumonia, viz, 43, which is more than double the average of the deaths from this cause during the last 10 years. There was one uncertified death; all the rest were certified by either doctor or coroner.

Seven inquests were held in the Town.

Infant Mortality. 60 infants died under 1 year of age, as compared with 38 last year, 82, 54 & 101 in the 3 previous years. The Infant Mortality Rate was 133.0 per 1,000 births registered.

The causes of death of the infants were:-

Convulsions	4	Diarrhoea & enteritis	4
Premature Birth	10	Whooping Cough	3
Atrophy, debility & marasmas	19	Bronchitis	2
		Atelictasis	2
Pneumonia	12	Gastritis	1
Measles	2	Other Causes	1

Of the 60 infants deaths 12 occurred within the first week of life, and 25 within the first month. Premature Birth and Atelictasis accounted for 12 deaths or 20% of the total. These are causes largely due to unfavourable antenatal conditions. Debility and wasting caused 19 deaths or 30.2 % - causes partly antenatal and partly due to want of care in the early days of life. Thus over 50% of the deaths were due chiefly to unfavourable antenatal conditions and want of care in the early days of life, and when one seeks for a cause it seems probable that the largely increased present day female factory labour not only acts injuriously upon the infant before its birth, but deprives them subsequently of their natural food and the care of their natural guardians.

To the coolness of the Summer months is due the few deaths from diarrhoeal diseases, whilst on the other hand the high percentage of deaths from Pneumonia and Bronchitis is due to the severity of the weather in the early part of the year, and to the presence of Measles and Whooping Cough in epidemic form.

Notification of Infectious Diseases. During the year 380 notifications were received as follows:- Measles and German Measles 326, Scarlet Fever 19, Typhoid Fever 1, Diphtheria 2, Erysipelas 5, Cerebro-spinal fever 4, and Ophthalmia Neonatorum 3.

In addition to the foregoing notified by medical practitioners, the following cases also came to my notice:- Meales and German Measles 280, Whooping Cough 182, Chicken Pox 28, and Mumps 2.

Zymotic Diseases. 32 deaths were caused by the 7 principal Zymotic diseases, giving a Zymotic Death Rate of 1.7 per 1,000 as compared with 0.8 in the previous year and 4.3 in 1915. Measles was epidemic during the first six months of the year, only 10 cases being notified after the middle of June. Fifteen deaths were caused by Measles, equal to a rate per 1,000 of the population of 0.82. The epidemic was widespread throughout the country in the early part of the year.

Digitized by the Internet Archive
in 2018 with funding from
Wellcome Library

https://archive.org/details/b30278703

Scarlet Fever. 19 cases, no deaths. Four of the cases were directly traced to infection outside the Town.
Typhoid Fever. 1 case. This was removed to the General Hospital Wolverhampton on the recommendation of the doctor in attendance. The house was found to be overcrowded. Twelve days after admission to Hospital the patient was sent home, the diagnosis not being confirmed.
Diphtheria. 2 cases. Both these occurred in the third quarter of the year. In one case the diagnosis was confirmed bacteriologically.
Ophthalmia Neonatorum. 3 cases, all recovered.
Cerebro-Spinal Fever. 4 cases notified, with 2 deaths. As this disease is the subject of special enquiry by the Local Government Board, I give below the particulars of the cases in tabular form, with brief comments on each:-

No.	Date of Notif'c'n	Age	Sex	Result: Date of Death	Result: Recovery	Bacteriological Examination: Of material from patient	Bacteriological Examination: Of contacts
1	Feb 2 '17	18	F	-	Complete	Positive	Negative
2	Mar 3 '17	41	F	May 8/17	-	do	Positive (1 out of 3)
3	Apr 11 '17	38	F	Apr 18/17	-	do	Negative
4	May 22 '17	33	F	-	Complete	Negative	Negative

Case 1. Three bedrooms inx house, occupied by father, mother, daughters aged 23, 20, 18 (patient) 4; sons, 16, 14 & 7. Waste water closet choked.
Case 2. Overcrowding found. One "contact" out of three, positive. Kept under observation and nothing further developed. A second swab in this case was negative.
Case 3. Father, mother (patient), and children aged 10½, 9½, 6, 4 and 2, occupying 2 bedrooms.
Case 4. Diagnosis not confirmed, either clinically or bacteriologically, and after a short stay in Hospital returned home.
All the cases were removed immediately to the General Hospital Wolverhampton, and the rooms, bedding etc thoroughly disinfected and cleaned. All contacts kept under observation.
Cases 1, 2, & 3 occurred in adjoining streets, Case No. 4 about a mile distant from the others. No relationship discovered between the cases and none occurred in the neighbourhood of troops.
School Closure. No schools were closed during the first quarter, but owing to the prevalence of Measles, the Infant Depts of the Central and Walsall Road Council Schools were disinfected and cleaned in the Easter Holidays. In the second quarter, owing to Measles, the Infant Dept of Walsall Road School was closed under Article 456 of the Code from April 16 to April 30; Little London Council School from 21st May to 4th June; and, owing to Whooping Cough, the Infact Dept of Portobello Council School was closed from June 11th to July 2nd.
Bacteriological Examinations:- 32 specimens were sent to the University of Birmingham, and reported on as follows:-

	No.	Positive	Negati
Examination for Diphtheria Bacilli	6	1	5
do do Tubercle do	16	4	12
do do Ringworm	1	0	1
do do Meningococcus (cerebrp-spinal "contacts")	9	1	8

Tuberculosis. There were during the year 74 notifications of Pulmonary and 18 of other forms of Tuberculosis - a total for all forms of 92. Of these,however, 7 of the Pulmonary cases had been previously reported on,so that the total number of fresh cases was 85,as compared with 71,45 and 81 in the previous 3 years.
The deaths from Pulmonary Tuberculosis numbered 24,giving a Death Rate equal to 1.3 per thousand of the population,as compared with 1.1, 0.8 and 1.1 in the 3 previous years.

Infant Welfare and Health Visiting. Health Visitor Miss A E Miller, (A.R. San. I).
The following is a summary of the work for the year:-
The number of notifications of births received was 448, i.i. 399 alive,29 premature, and 20 stillborn,and the total number of visits made 2303. These consisted of
446 primary visits, and
1857 secondary visits
The number of children on the visiting list at the end of 1917 was
383 under 1 year old, and
126 one year,and under five.
The deaths of children in the visiting list during 1917 were
20 under 10 days old
26 10 days and under 1 yr
1 1 yr and under 5 yrs.
The number on the books at the Welfare Centre was 284 and the total attendances for the year 1448.
Seventy-Six cases of insanitary conditions were reported to the Medical Officer of Health and dealt with by the Sanitary Inspector.
Cases of Measles visited 284 cases of Measles were visited and Instructions and advice given on the management of same.
Tuberculosis Visiting. 44 old cases and 33 new ones visited,the total number of visits paid being 334.
School Visiting. 8 schools have been visited 4 times,and 1000 visits paid to houses,and advice given for verminous conditions and minor skin troubles.
Antenatal Work. There is no provision for ensuring medical advice being given to expectant mothers,but some of these attend at the Welfare Centre and are given advice by the Health Visitors who also visit some of them at their own homes. Instruction is given at the Centre by Voluntary workers in the making of garments and other things.
Postnatal work consists of systematic visiting by the Health Visitors.attendance at the Infant Welfare Centre once weekly,and sewing meetings once weekly.
Child Welfare work during the year has made satisfactory progress. I regard the systematic visiting by far the most important part. A good number of mothers attend the Welfare Centre with their infants,but for the most part there are mothers who would normally

desire to do the best for their infants. It is very difficult to induce the careless, indifferent and negligent mothers to come to these places.

A commencement has been made in the direction of work amongst expectant mothers; more are being brought under the influence of the Health Visitors for appropriate advice and assistance, and there are signs of an increasing attendance at the Centre. Good work is being done in providing materials and assisting in making garments. Domestic sanitation is very slow to improve and the greatest difficulty is experienced in trying to get many of the people to live above the level of the lower animals in their homes. Overcrowding is a present day ~~evei~~ evil and is difficult to abate.

Medical supervision at the Welfare Centre under a rota of Doctors as at present constituted is not a satisfactory arrangement except as a temporary expedient, and is one which the Local Government Board looks upon with disfavour. The Centre should be under the entire charge of a Medical Officer, who would not only be responsible for the supervision, but would keep uniform medical records of the cases.
The arrangements at Willenhall do not conform with those in surrounding Towns and in the Township generally.

Vaccination. One hundred and seventeen children were successfully vaccinated, and 355 exemption certificates were obtained on "conscientious" grounds. The vaccination of 19 children was postponed, and 37 died unvaccinated.

Sanitary Inspection of the District. Appended is a Summary

A. of action under the Housing and Town Planning Act 1909
B. of the Sanitary Inspector's work for the year, and
C. a Table of particulars asked for by the Home Office.

I am, Gentlemen,
Yours obediently

Henry J Dean

Medical Officer of Health.

Infant Mortality

Cause of Death		Under 1 week	1-2 weeks	2-3 weeks	3-4 weeks	3 & under 4 weeks	4 weeks and under 3 months	3 months and under 6 months	6 months and under 9 months	9 months and under 12 months	Total Deaths under 1 year
All causes	Certified	12	8	4	1	25	12	8	6	9	6
	Uncertified	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Measles						-			1	1	2
Whooping-cough						-		1		2	3
Convulsions						-	2		1	1	4
Bronchitis						-	1		1		2
Pneumonia (all forms)			1			1	2	2	2	5	12
Diarrhoea & Enteritis			2			2		1	1		4
Gastritis						-		1			1
Atelectasis		1	1			2					2
Premature Birth		9		1		10					10
Atrophy, Debility and Marasmus		2	3	3	1	9	7	3			17
Other causes			1			1					1
		12	8	4	1	25	12	8	6	9	60

Table A

Housing and Town Planning Act

Houses inspected	1	See also Table B for inspections
Houses condemned and closed as being unfit for habitation	1	
Demolished	nil	

Improvements carried out and other work

New houses erected or in course of erection	nil
Houses taken down or in course of for works extensions during 1917.	12
No. of Houses connected with deep sewer	2
No. of sewer connections carried out by the Surveyor's Department	5
No. of water closets & flush tanks erected	35
No. of waste water closets erected	nil
No. of dust bins provided	8
No. of privies abolished	16
No. of waste water closets converted to wash downs	1
No. of Ashpits abolished	3

Table B

Summary of Work carried out by Inspector of Nuisances

		Inspections made	Informal notices	Formal notices	Nuisances	Nuisances abated after informal notice	Nuisances abated after formal notice	Prosecutions
Dwelling-houses and Schools	Foul conditions, verminous &c	89	27	15	43	17	12	-
	Structural defects	110	46	21	69	23	13	-
	Overcrowded	147	13	24	37	11	19	2
	Unfit for habitation	19	-	1	1	-	1	-
	Dairies and Milkshops	31	3	1	3	2	1	-
	Cowsheds	6	2	-	2	2	-	-
	Bakehouses	58	5	-	5	4	-	-
	Lodging houses	10	1	-	1	1	-	-
	Other Workshops & factories	113	40	26	53	-	21	-
	Slaughterhouses	40	17	-	17	17	-	-
	Ashpits & privies	1279	19	14	37	12	9	-
	Deposits of refuse & manure	59	12	4	16	11	4	-
	Water closets	431	92	27	119	80	24	-
House drainage	Defective traps	6	6	-	6	4	-	-
	No disconnection	1	1	-	1	-	-	-
	Other faults	90	29	13	42	21	12	-
	Water supply	39	8	3	11	7	2	-
	Pigsties and Pigs	40	9	5	14	9	4	
	Animals	17	7	1	8	7	1	-
	Smoke nuisances	8	3	1	4	2	1	-
	Other nuisances	53	21	10	38	15	9	-
	Inquiries into infectious cases	964	-	-	-	-	-	-

Seizures of unwholesome meat nil

Condemned as unfit for food - voluntary surrender - 5 pigs 30 lbs of bussed beef - 16 tins of preserved food. all destroyed.

Samples of water taken for analysis nil

Lots of Infected bedding disinfected 385

Rooms fumigated after infectious cases 76

Schools fumigated do 4 Infant Departments

Formal notices during 1917 not complied with 16.

Table C.

Abstract of Particulars asked for by the Home Office.

Factories.	Inspections	43	Notices	26
Workshops.	"	70	"	14

Defects found.

Want of Ventilation	1	remedied	-
" Cleanliness	14	"	9
Other Nuisances	22	"	17
Sanitary accommodation	15	"	14
Breach of sanitary requirements in Bakehouses	1	"	1
Other offences	8	"	8

Other matters.

Notified by H.M. Inspector	notices	26
Reports to "	Action taken	21
Other Reports new workshops		3
Underground bakehouses in use		Nil

Homework.

Lists received once	1	outworkers	2
twice	3	"	5
Lists received from other Districts	2	"	1

Workshops on the Register at end of 1917.

Lock, Key and Latch Manufacture	139
File cutting	7
Other hardware manufactures	21
Articles of dress	16
Workers in wood and iron	18
Bakehouses	16
Sundry trades	41
Total General trades	46
Total Bakehouses	6
	310

Factories on the Register - including bakehouse factories 5 -		86
Occupied		86